

Wild Rice and the Ojibway People

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Wild Rice and the Ojibway People." *The Annals of Iowa* 50 (1990), 682-683.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.9484>

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came from non-Indians. Now, there exists under one cover a perception of reactions by articulate Indians.

The book promises benefits for several different audiences. For tribal members it provides viewpoints somewhat different from those of most non-Indians who wrote through the era of the conflict. For non-Indians it supplies a means of dealing with uneasiness and guilt over the plights of Minnesota Sioux people following the war. For scholars it offers under a single cover a compilation of opinions previously available only through considerable effort. For Indian-white relations it suggests an effort by the Minnesota Historical Society to engender reconciliation.

No negative aspects of the work come to the mind of this reviewer. A recollection of similar responses from Indian families doing personal interviews corroborate the contents. *Through Dakota Eyes* contains disturbing passages as well as heroic tales told by tribal members, and is highly recommended to thoughtful readers of all kinds—especially academicians, and persons in all walks of life who live within the boundaries of historic Sioux Country.

Wild Rice and the Ojibway People, by Thomas Vennum, Jr. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988. ix, 358 pp. Illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT J. GOUGH, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, wild rice was central to the culture of Indian people in the upper Midwest and central Canada. In a wide-ranging and carefully researched volume, Thomas Vennum, Jr., author of a previous study of Ojibway dance, documents wild rice's social, nutritional, spiritual, and economic significance to the Ojibway. Vennum draws on historical documents, previous ethnographies, and more than twenty years of field work. Dozens of photographs incisively illustrate his text.

Perhaps the richest chapters of Vennum's fine book describe traditional harvesting methods. Under the overall supervision of rice chiefs, every year in late summer several extended families harvested the same rice fields, based in temporary lakeside camps. The entire family worked, children learned traditions, and social interaction increased. In Vennum's judgment, the camps "led to communal bonding and a sense of identity" (158). He quotes with sympathy Ojibway elders who lament the disintegration of these traditions.

Some practices had changed by the early-twentieth century—binding the rice a few weeks before harvesting was practically aban-

done by 1900. Vennum's emphasis, however, is on the later effect of commercialization introduced by non-Indians. By mid-century, harvesting shortcuts had developed as a commercial orientation replaced subsistence uses of wild rice. Then in the 1970s paddy cultivation by non-Indians, largely in California, economically marginalized Indian production.

In a brief chapter, Vennum discusses legal issues in wild rice harvesting. Controversial federal court decisions have recently protected Ojibway off-reservation fishing, hunting, and gathering rights. Indian wild rice harvesting has not yet received much public attention, perhaps due in part to its limited economic significance, in contrast to the alleged impact of Indian spear-fishing on tourism. Although Vennum does not speculate, there may be a silver lining here for Indians: by reducing chances for Indians to use wild rice as a cash crop, commercialized harvesting by non-Indians, resulting from its belated adoption into the Euro-American diet, may contribute to a reemphasis among Indians on wild rice's cultural significance.

Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change, by Sally McMurry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. ix, 261 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JULIE ROY JEFFREY, GOUCHER COLLEGE

Professor Sally McMurry notes in her preface that her interest in the social context of design dates back to her days as a student intern when she discovered that stylistic and technical descriptions failed to capture the full meaning of architecture. Her early insight eventually led to this valuable study of northern families and their farmhouses in the nineteenth century. McMurry's lavishly illustrated book does provide ample detail on the character of rural vernacular architecture between 1830 and 1900. But McMurry has done far more than describe rural buildings. She carefully analyzed both the social and cultural forces influencing rural designers and the values and needs that those planners brought to the design process.

While much scholarly attention has focused on the relationship of urban and suburban notions of domestic life to architecture, McMurry shows that nineteenth-century rural Americans were also engaged in working out new social and architectural understandings of changing family roles. She concentrates on a group of prosperous northern farming families who, she argues, acted as cultural mediators for their communities. Convinced of the need to make farming

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